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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN'S KING ABDULLAH VISITS BAGHDAD

Classified By: Political Minister Robert Ford for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)  
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[11](#). (C) The long awaited, once postponed, and highly secretive visit to Baghdad of Jordan's King Abdullah successfully took place August 12. On the ground for a relatively short time, Abdullah held a one hour meeting with PM Maliki (Deputy PM Barham Salih, National Security Advisor Mowaffaq al-Rubaie and FM Hoshyar Zebari also participating) and a 15-minute follow-on meeting with Vice President Adel Abdul Mehdi. The visit marked the culmination of a series of positive steps both countries have taken over the summer to warm relations, including PM Maliki's June 12 visit to Amman and the GOJ's subsequent public announcement naming an Ambassador to Iraq. The King's visit garnered headlines in the Iraqi and regional Arab press and appears to have given renewed impetus to the reopening a Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad in the coming weeks.

[12](#). (C) Senior MFA contacts told us August 13 that they expect a second GOJ technical team to come to Baghdad by the end of the month to make security and logistical preparations at its proposed IZ embassy site (Note: an initial GOJ technical team visited Baghdad July 2-3.) The MFA said that, assuming no unexpected delays occur, they expect a Jordanian Ambassador to arrive here by late September. While the reopening of other Arab embassies continues to be stymied by Iraq's inability to agree internally on naming Iraqi Ambassadors to those countries, progress on the Jordanian front, they said, is steadily moving forward.

[13](#). (C) Comment: Jordanian security requirements prevented PM Maliki and other senior GOI officials from learning of this visit until shortly before it occurred, and thus precluded the normal preparations that would surround a head of state visit. As such, it is difficult to gauge immediately what its lasting impact will be. However, coming in the wake of the visits of UAE FM Abdullah bin Zayid and Lebanese Parliamentary bloc lead Sa'ad Hariri earlier this summer, King Abdullah's visit provides further evidence -- albeit only symbolic at this point -- that Iraq's engagement with its Arab neighbors is gaining some traction. The proof, however, will be when photo ops turn into concrete acts such as the reopening of embassies and the reestablishment of the political, economic, cultural and other activities associated with "normal" relations. Follow-on to the steps the MFA expects from the Jordanians would mark the type of real progress that is needed. We will continue to facilitate these efforts as we can and look forward to assisting the Jordanian technical team when it arrives.

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